

I oppose loosening the rules designed to promote and protect diversity of media ownership. These rules were adopted to ensure that the public would receive a diverse range of viewpoints from the media, and not simply the opinions of a handful of media conglomerates.

The People Rise Up Against Venezuela's Commercial Media

[]By Alex Main

[]Narco News

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[]An amazing sight: Thousands of people have surrounded the headquarters of five commercial television stations (RCTV, Globovision, TVS, Meridiano TV, Venevision) and are treating them to one hell of a cazerolazo (pot-banging). They are shouting "medios golpistas!" (putschist media) and "terroristas!". The channels have stopped (probably only briefly) broadcasting anti governmental propaganda and are at last giving some pro governmental demonstrations some coverage.

[]The television commentators keep reminding their audience of the grave threat to their lives and their profession. The OAS secretary general, Cesar Gaviria, who is here to "mediate" negotiations between the government and the opposition, just made a declaration in which he condemns these "assaults on press freedom" (this phone declaration is being broadcast over and over by the TV stations that are surrounded by demonstrators).

[]But these declarations somehow fall flat when you see the images of the demonstrators: many women, old men (banging away impressively for their age), very ordinary looking citizens, many still in their work clothes. No sticks, no guns, no people trying to climb over the fences and walls of the establishments. Just peaceful groups of citizens saying: we've had enough, how about showing a little bit of us now instead of always showing rich folks demonstrating in the east of Caracas and instead of trying by any means possible to make your audiences think that this government is undemocratic, dictatorial, and "castro-communist."

[]These people are of course being depicted as mobs of uneducated, bloodthirsty Chavistas that dream of savagely attacking journalists.

[]On previous nights the well-bred eastern caraquegos were doing their own potbanging in front of Channel 8, the state-run television station that broadcasts "Alo Presidente," Chavez's weekly radio/TV show. This received no coverage from the commercial media and provoked no comments from Cesar Gaviria. Go figure.

[] (In accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107, this material is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving the included information for research and educational purposes.)

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